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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Communications Electronic Media Services Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2635

Nov. 5, 1993

SAFE HANDLING & COOKING INSTRUCTIONS -- USDA is proposing a new rule on safe handling and cooking instructions for raw meat and poultry. It has been forwarded to the Federal Register for publication. The new proposed rule calls for a 45-day comment period after date of publication, and implementation 30 days after publication of a final regulation. The rule calls for all raw meat and poultry products to be accompanied with safe handling and cooking instructions. Ground and chopped products must have a label, and all other raw meat and poultry products must have a label, sticker or leaflet. All products must have the label by April 15. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

BATTLING FIRES -- USDA's Forest Service, with the assistance of other agencies, is sending help to southern California to control wildfires in the region. Fire engines, airtankers, bulldozers, helicopters, emergency leadership teams, food preparation, and supplies will help local, state and federal emergency efforts already underway. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, who visited the area, has dispatched Jim Lyons, USDA assistant secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, to help oversee the emergency response to the fires. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

FOOD CONSUMPTION TRENDS -- Latest statistics reveal that Americans consumed less red meat and more poultry in 1992. Red meat accounted for 60 percent of the total meat supply in 1992, compared with 70 percent in 1980. Chicken and turkey totaled 32 percent of all meat consumed in 1992, up from 23 percent in 1980. Each American averaged 18 pounds less red meat and 26 pounds more poultry. Americans also used less whole milk, animal fats, and eggs in 1992 compared to year-earlier figures. During the period from 1970 to 1992, a 43 percent increase in vegetable oils and fats offset a 26 percent decline in the use of animal fats. **Contact: Judith Putnam (202) 219-0870.**

U.S. IMPORTS -- The European Community was the largest source of U.S. agricultural imports during just-ended fiscal year 1993, at \$4.3 billion. Canada was the largest individual nation source, at \$4 billion. Mexico was the second largest individual nation exporting to the U.S. at \$2.6 billion. Brazil and Australia were in third and fourth place. Indonesia gained the most, moving into fifth place due to expanded rubber and coconut oil exports to the U.S. **Contact: Joel Greene (202) 219-0822.**

U.S. EXPORTS -- First the first time in a given month U.S. consumer food exports exceeded bulk commodity exports. Last August broad-based gains in high-value consumer food shipments were registered, totaling \$1.8 billion, while bulk products experienced a 15 percent decline to \$1.1 billion. The largest sales increases were recorded for fresh fruit, rice, fresh vegetables, and poultry meat. But the \$2.9 billion value of U.S. agricultural exports during the month were down 5 percent from August 1992 totals. **Contact: Steve MacDonald (202) 219-0822.**

EFFECTS OF EC EXCHANGE RATE -- The European Community's new exchange rate system adopted last summer could have mixed results for US-EC trade. EC interest rates will be allowed to fall. The likely immediate effect will weaken EC currencies, boosting exports and dampening imports. The long-term effect should ease credit conditions and spur economic growth, raising the EC's demand for imports and thereby benefiting the outlook for U.S. exports. **Contact: Nathan Childs (202) 219-0313.**

AG POLICY -- Environmental and budgetary concerns are bringing agricultural policy to a crossroads. The conservation reserve program is costing \$2 billion a year. Reductions in Federal income support are reducing the leverage for environmental compliance linked to farm programs. Two approaches to agricultural and environmental policy will likely receive greater consideration: increased reliance on regulation, such as chemical bans, taxes, and fines; and use of environmental stewardship payments to reward environmental performance. **Contact: Cathy Greene (202) 219-0313.**

FLOOD ASSISTANCE -- Disaster assistance from USDA to the nine Midwest states affected by floods earlier this year totals over \$200 million. The funds have come from a variety of USDA programs including crop disaster payments, crop insurance, indemnity payments, loans, emergency watershed protection projects, and emergency food stamps and commodities for group feeding. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, coordinator of the long-term recovery efforts, says the payments and other assistance USDA has provided to date are a beginning to the recovery process. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

TOBACCO EXPORTS AND IMPORTS -- U.S. unmanufactured tobacco exports for the first eight months of 1993 totaled 145,539 metric tons, valued at \$921 million. This is a decrease of 16 percent in quantity and 18 percent in value from year-earlier figures. U.S. unmanufactured tobacco imports for consumption for the period January to August totaled 281,043 tons, valued at \$841 million. This is an increase of 2 percent in quantity, but a decrease of 16 percent in value from the same period in 1992. U.S. growers are looking forward to this year's burley auction season that begins November 22. **Contact: Ted Horoschak (202) 720-9524.**

CITRUS EXPORTS HIGHER -- U.S. exports of horticultural products in August 1993 totaled \$587 million, a healthy 16 percent above August 1992. The largest increases were in fresh citrus, up 43 percent, and fresh vegetables, up 40 percent. During the first 11 months of fiscal 1993 the total value of U.S. horticultural exports was \$6.59 billion, 5 percent above the same period a year ago. **Contact: Frank Piason (202) 720-6590.**

GOOD HEALTH FOR KIDS -- Regular physical activity is important to maintaining good health of children. It burns calories, helps with weight control and is important in preventing some chronic diseases. Experts recommend that children engage in a minimum of 30 to 45 minutes of physical activity each day. For strength, flexibility, and fitness of the heart and lungs, participating in games and other childhood activities may be important. Serving a variety of foods can help children maintain a healthy body and weight. Serve plenty of fruits, vegetables and grain products, serve less fat and fewer fatty foods, and allow sugars and sweets only in moderation. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-4141.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1900 -- The Administration's health care plan has implications for all Americans. **Maria Bynum** reports on the plan and how it can affect rural residents. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1382 -- The health care plan; search for a better pizza cheese; the case of the "invisible itch;" turkey myths; unwanted fall and winter house guests. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1892 -- Conservation reserve payments; rural health care; bacteria protect potatoes; Rocky Mountain alligators; solar fly zappers. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1645 -- CO2 & mesquite; CO2 side benefit; natural bactericides; bone loss genetics; smoking & bone loss. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, Nov. 10, vegetable outlook, world ag/grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Thursday, Nov. 11, Holiday; Monday, Nov. 15, Livestock/poultry update; Wednesday, Nov. 17, fruit outlook; Thursday, Nov. 18, agricultural outlook; Friday, Nov. 19, cattle on feed, wheat outlook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on a computerized feeding system for sows. **Pat O'Leary** reports on the "We C.A.R.E." team in Delaware that helps farmers solve conservation problems.

ACTUALITIES -- **Eugene Moos**, USDA Under Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs, comments on NAFTA. USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the latest weather and crop conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on the Chesapeake Bay water quality effort. **Lynn Wyvill** reports on Thanksgiving food safety tips from USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

APPLES...are smaller in size this year in the area served by **John Weir** (KBUR/KGRS, Burlington, IA), but the flavor is excellent. John says it gives consumers an opportunity to eat twice as many. The wet, cool summer apparently kept the crop from developing well. October was the driest month of the year, allowing farmers to harvest the corn crop. Producers tell John the corn was not as good as it looked, too many wet spots in the field.

DOUBLE CROPPED BEANS...that were late in development suffered during a recent heavy frost, says **Kevin Jay** (WINU, Highland, IL), lowering quality. Corn yields in his region are about average.

EMERGENCY LOANS...are available to producers in Minnesota, says **Amy Alberts** (KROC, Rochester, MN). Producers will have 8 months to apply for the 4.5% loans from the state. Amy says the weather in the southeast portion of the state helped to boost dairy production this summer. Amy is a new voice at the station, replacing **Tad Anthony-Pirmantgen**.

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WINTER WHEAT...is up, says **Carey Martin** (KVOO, Tulsa, OK), and it's looking good. Carey says the station is planning more farm airtime next year, and changing program content.

DOUBLE WHAMMY...hit the cotton crop this year in the area served by **Larry Burchfield** (KWCK, Searcy, AR). Yields were reduced due to hot weather this summer, along with and an outbreak of tobacco budworm. For producers in his area its the most expensive cotton crop ever. The KWCK 3rd annual Ag Expo is scheduled for January 7-9 in Searcy. Events include FFA & 4-H day on Friday, and a farm equipment auction on Saturday, January 8.

SUNBELT AG EXPO...in Moultrie, GA was covered by **Gary Cooper** (WTMC/Southeast Agrinet, Ocala, FL). Warm, clear weather encouraged record attendance. 918 exhibitors participated in the program.

NAFB...annual meeting in Kansas City, MO, November 10-14, 1993. See you there.

VIC POWELL 
Electronic Media Services